NOVA SCOTIA
Education and Culture

P AND I RELEASE

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NOVA SCOTIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE
PUBLIC SCHOOL PROGRAMS' INTERNET ACCESS AND USE POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

Students in public schools in Nova Scotia will select from a variety of information sources, including the Internet, to support and extend their learning as prescribed in the *Public School Programs*. Access and use of the Internet by students in schools will allow them to access local, national, and international electronic information sources, and to collaborate with peers and experts to solve curriculum-related problems. Access to information and collaboration are vital to intellectual inquiry in a democracy.

BACKGROUND

The Internet is a global network of computers by which people access and exchange data, words, images, and sound information. The Internet provides students enrolled in public school programs access to a wide variety of computer and information resources.

Schools, during the hours that the Public School Programs are the basis for student Internet access, provide access in accordance with the goals and outcomes of the *Public School Programs* and the Provincial Policy. Schools involved in public access provision to the community provide electronic access to the general public, in a non-public school programs context, in accordance with the Public Access to the Internet Policy. A copy of the "Public Access to the Internet Policy" is available to each school through the appropriate regional rchool board or through the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Culture's web site at http://www.ednet.ns.ca.

Educational uses of the Internet by students pursuing public school programs include electronic mail, searching and creating on-line databases, transfering of electronic files of information from one computer to another, and hypertext (World Wide Web) displays of searchable, indexed information. Students who have access to the educational information resources of the Internet and the means to exchange thoughts, ideas and insights, and publish their research and creative works over the Internet, are poised to be active participants in the information age.

Student access to and use of learning resources, including the Internet, are to be guided by the goals and outcomes of the *Public School Programs*. Through planned and supervised curriculum-based learning experiences, students are taught the information literacy skills of lifelong learners leading independent, productive lives. Knowledge-based work opportunities will form a fundamental cornerstone of Nova Scotia's economy for the twenty-first century.

Most people who use the Internet to communicate are well- meaning people of good character. However, as in all other mediums of communication, some people's behaviours and motives are annoying, harmful, or dangerous to children. Students benefit from supervision and guidance as they explore the electronic Internet environment and the relationship opportunities this environment presents. Supervision and guidance help ensure that students' electronic experiences are healthy, safe, and educationally relevant.

OBJECTIVES

Department of Education and Culture Public School Programs and Internet Access and Use

1. to provide Internet access in accordance with the *Public School Programs* of Nova Scotia to inform, educate, and provide access to the ideas of humanity.

2. to conduct and share research in pursuit of curriculum outcomes

3. to communicate with peers and identified experts to solve curriculum-related problems

4. to become familiar with career opportunities in a global information economy

5. to develop information literacy and technological competence necessary for meaningful employment in an information economy

6. to contribute perspectives and insights to discussions intent upon developing global awareness and understanding

7. to develop entrepreneurial skills

DIRECTIVES

- Every regional school board will develop and publish a policy on how to offer Internet service to students and teachers in accordance with the policy objectives above.

- A clearly written access and acceptable use policy will be communicated to the publics served by each regional school board and a copy sent to the Policy Branch of the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Culture.

- Each public school will develop an "acceptable use of the Internet policy for students," consistent and compatible with the Provincial Policy and is to be approved by the regional school board.

GUIDELINES

With the guidance and instruction of teachers, students may retrieve, process, create, communicate, and evaluate electronic information via databases, bulletin boards, electronic mail, listservs, newsgroups, and world wide web sites to pursue the curriculum outcomes of the Public School Programs of Nova Scotia.

Students may access teacher-previewed, recommended, or evaluated information systems and sources in structured ways for instructional and curriculum purposes.

Regional school boards are encouraged to engage teachers in the evaluation of Internet resources and other learning materials, and to support the effective integration and use of those resources within the curriculum program.

Curriculum and instructional opportunities are to be available to all students

- to develop the skills and habits of accessing, selecting, using, creating and publishing information in a full range of print, non-print, and electronic formats for a range of audiences
- to research and solve self- and teacher- identified problems, questions, and issues that require original research and the critical analysis, evaluation, and use of a wide range of information bases
- to think and reflect critically, and to make decisions about data and information, based upon their personal values and learning needs
- to think and reflect critically to recognize the values, beliefs, perspectives, and biases of the information and information sources they encounter
- to pursue independent learning opportunities and interests with the support and direction of teachers and parents

PUBLIC SCHOOL PROGRAMS INTERNET CODE OF CONDUCT

It is the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Culture's responsibility to

- communicate the Provincial Policy to each Regional School Board and invite Regional Boards to participate in a trainer of trainers model in support of Regional School Board implementation of the Provincial Policy.

It is the Regional School Board's responsibility to

- develop and publish guidelines for the use of Internet by students and teachers

- provide professional development in-service for teachers, program assistants, and library assistant staff in the policy, and in their roles and responsibilities in the implementation and maintenance of the acceptable use policy
- provide professional development opportunities to help teachers integrate Internet use within the curriculum
- refer unacceptable use of Internet to the Board's Discipline Policy Committee

It is the School's responsibility to

- clearly communicate with students and parents, the purposes, benefits, and risks associated with the use of Internet resources, prior to the provision of access
- select Internet resources which support and extend student learning
- designate staff to manage the Local Area Network (LAN)
- issue Internet accounts to students and teachers who have signed the School Acceptable Use Policy
- offer to demonstrate the Internet to parents
- ensure that the terms of license agreements between software vendors and the school are observed (all users of the software acquired by the school must abide by these terms.)
- facilitate staff development related to Internet access and curriculum use

It is the Network Administrator's responsibility to

- ensure the system's operations and the confidentiality protection of the user's work located on the school's electronic system
- assign storage space to each student or "class" with network access. (This storage space may be treated like school lockers.)
- assign student network accounts that include a username and private password, assuring that access is the responsibility of the student. (In some cases, the school network system administrator may issue a limited "class" account to groups of students that may be issued for specific purposes for a specific amount of time.)
- disable any Internet account at the direction of the principal when it has been determined that the Acceptable Use Policy has been violated

- ensure that threats to the stability, integrity, and/or security of the LAN are minimized. (The network administrator has the right to view/and or delete user files without prior notice to the user when the administrator deems the status of the system's stability, integrity, or security require such action.)

It is the Teacher's responsibility to

- ensure that the use of Internet resources is consistent with curriculum outcomes of the *Public School Programs*
- provide planned and supervised curriculum-based learning experiences for students through which students are taught the information literacy skills of lifelong learners who lead independent, productive lives
- preview and evaluate learning resources including Internet sites prior to recommending them for student use
- direct students to previewed, recommended, and evaluated Internet resources integrated within the curriculum and instructional program
- supervise student access to Internet resources identified through tools such as electronic search engines and news groups, and to provide appropriate guidance and instruction to students in the relevant and effective use of those sites that have not been evaluated by the teacher
- inform students that communications on networks are often public in nature and that privacy is rarely available
- provide students who are using the Internet in a school location other than the classroom in which the teacher is located, with clear direction and expectations of student compliance with school guidelines for the acceptable use of school-provided networked information resources, electronic systems, and Internet.
- review the Acceptable Use Policy with the student before access is permitted by the teacher providing assignments or activities that involve student access to networked information resources. (The teacher will also confirm with the principal that the appropriately signed Agreement is on file for each student before access is permitted by that teacher.)
- provide developmentally appropriate, structured learning activities, and lists of resources particularly suited to the curriculum outcomes. (Teachers will deal with access to inappropriate information by providing guidance in search strategies, and supervising access as is appropriate for student age/grade level. Student use of the Internet is subject to the School Discipline Policy.)

It is the Parent/Guardian's responsibility to

- sign the school's Acceptable Use Policy to indicate his/her understanding and agreement with the terms of provision of student access to the Internet

It is the Student's responsibility to

- follow responsibly school guidelines for the acceptable use of school-provided networked information resources, electronic systems, and Internet as part of a planned curriculum learning activity
- use school-provided networked information resources and electronic systems responsibly as part of a planned curriculum learning activity
- submit to the school principal, a signed Acceptable Use Agreement, which includes parent/ guardian permission. (A signed Acceptable Use Agreement indicates his/her understanding and agreement with the terms of provision of student access to the Internet.)
- exercise caution when releasing personally identifying information to any person or electronic system
- backup his/her personal electronic files according to a schedule and procedure communicated by the school's system administrator. (All files will occasionally have to be purged from the computer by the school's nework administrator for reasons such as electronic viruses, hardware maintenance, management of system resources such as storage memory, or the end of a school year or project for which access to the technology has been provided.)
- assume with his/her parent/guardian, all responsibility resulting from financial obligations entered into by the student. (Teachers will provide guidance to students about such opportunities, possibilities and liabilities.)

Security of Information and the Internet

Students must be told that information distributed over the Internet may not be secure. It is possible for electronic messages to be intercepted, read, and modified without the author's permission or knowledge.

Student Privacy and Safety

Students must be alerted to the dangers of making personal identifying information available over the Internet. Lurkers with access to students' pictures, addresses, and telephone numbers have harassed and harmed children or members of their families. Just as posting students' pictures and contact information in a public newspaper would not be advisable, posting the same information on an Internet accessible homepage may result in unwanted attention, solicitation, or

harassment. Discussing student interests and activities in forums such as web pages and e-mail are legitimate student activities; however, students and schools may not release information that could be used to bring the student in direct contact with correspondents. Students and schools should not release the following student identifying information over Internet e-mail or other electronic publications/files: student picture, student or family telephone/fax number, parent/ guardian or siblings names, or student address.

Students who use the Internet and communication technologies may be in communication with people throughout the world. The risks associated with communicating in a global environment include unwanted communication and solicitations by individuals who gain access to students' personal identifying information, and access to harassing, pornographic, obscene, racist, sexually explicit or threatening material, imagery or language. Minimizing student exposure to such risks is a key requirement of the Public School Programs' Internet Access and Use Policy.

Public School Programs Acceptable Use

- Students will use school-provided Internet access with direct teacher permission and supervision.
- Students' personal information such as their pictures, addresses, telephone numbers, parents' names and home or work addresses/telephone numbers, will not be published by the students or schools.
- Students who receive information or messages that make them uncomfortable will immediately report the occurrence to the supervising teacher.
- Students will never agree to meet with someone they encounter online without the prior permission of their parents/guardians.
- Students will follow the schools' established rules for going online.
- Students will not attempt to access private or personal materials, information, or files of others without their prior authorization. Students may view published web pages and cite information obtained from them appropriately.
- Students will not vandalize, damage, or disable the work of another individual or organization.
- Students will not access, manipulate, alter or attempt to damage, disable or destroy technology or computer files.
- Students can copy only material for which they have permission.
- Students will not access, create or distribute harassing, pornographic, obscene, racist, sexually explicit, or threatening material, imagery or language.

- Students will not use school-provided Internet access for illegal purposes or for non-approved commercial purposes.

Consequences of Unacceptable Use - (Sanctions)

Disciplinary actions related to student access to electronic resources may be determined at the school and/or classroom level in accordance with provincial,board and school discipline policies.

- Violations of the school or provincial acceptable use policies may result in a loss of access to electronic resources. Such loss may result in the inability of the student to successfully complete the curriculum learning outcomes.

- When appropriate, law enforcement agencies may be involved.

DISCLAIMER

Use of any information obtained via the Internet is at the user's own risk.

Sample Permission Form for Student Access to the School's Internet Connection

Student Section

All students must read and sign and have his/her parents/guardians read and sign the **Permission Form for Student Access to the School's Internet Connection** before access privileges are provided by the school.

I have ___ have not ___ attended a school-sponsored information session concerning the school's Acceptable Use Policy.

I have read and understand the school's Acceptable Use Policy and agree to abide by the conditions and spirit of the Policy.

Signed _____ Student Number _____

Electronic ID _____

Parent Section

I have ___ have not ___ attended a school-sponsored information session concerning the school's Acceptable Use Policy.

I have read and understand the school's Acceptable Use Policy and agree to abide by the conditions and spirit of the Policy.

I understand and agree that any financial transactions undertaken by this student from the school Internet account are my responsibility.

Signed _____

Sample Teacher Statement of Provision of Student Access to the Internet

I have reviewed the school's Acceptable Use Policy with students registered in the course and course section below prior to authorizing their access to networked information resources within my instructional program. I have received confirmation from the principal that all students in this course and section, with the exception of those listed below, have supplied a signed "Permission Form for Student Access to the School's Internet Connection. " Students listed below are not authorized for Internet access.

Signed _____ Date _____

Course Name _____ Section _____

Students not Authorized for Internet Access